

Identifying Effective Marketing Messages

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About SmartPower

- ❑ 501c(3) not-for-profit clean energy *marketing* organization
- ❑ Created by 5 private foundations and the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund to create demand for clean energy
- ❑ Use traditional and collaborative grass root marketing techniques to build the clean energy market;



Message Development with CESA

- ❑ 5 state funds through Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA) raised \$525,000 to work on communications challenges facing Clean Energy



Our Challenges

- ❑ Quantitative research consistently shows consumers willing to switch and pay more, yet, there is minimal market activity to date
- ❑ There are no early adopters -- no one is buying it! Why?
- ❑ There is a lack of common language -- Is it green? Clean? Renewable? alternative?

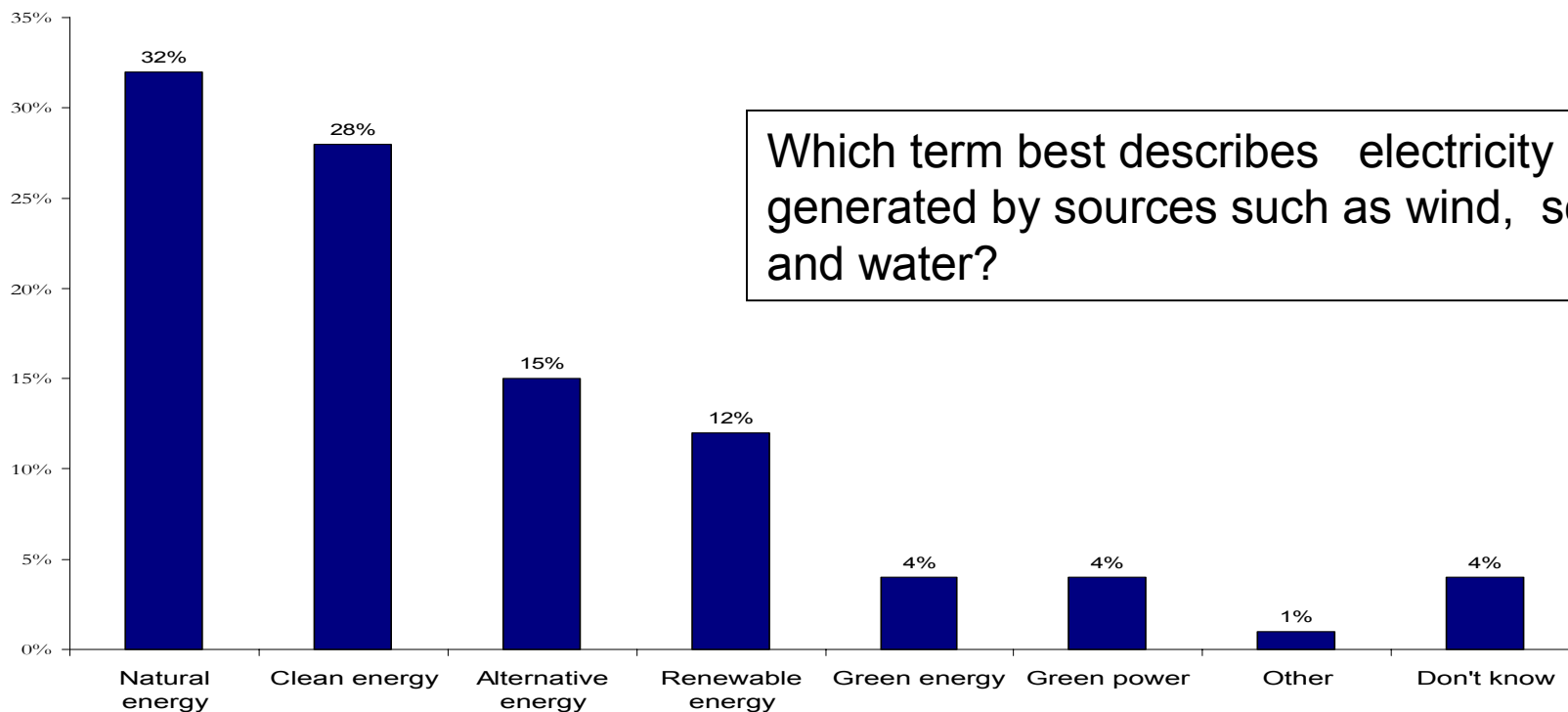


The First Barrier: Language

- ❑ What do we call this?
 - ✓ Research has suggested that consumers are not typically familiar with the terms we use.
- ❑ Our agency conducted an Omnibus survey of 1000 Americans across the country
 - ✓ Which term best describes electricity generated by sources such as wind, solar and water?



Surveyed 1000 Americans



“Clean Energy” wins

- ❑ The term “natural” ranked highest (32%) , but is too easily confused with natural gas.
- ❑ The term “clean” ranked a close second (28%) and inherently describes the positive quality.
- ❑ The terms “Renewable” only 12%, “Green” only 4%
- ❑ “Clean” works best for broadest audience



Messaging Research

- ❑ Qualitative research (six groups in Connecticut and Mass.—consumer, business and “opinion leaders.”)
- ❑ We wanted to understand what are the *emotional barriers* which present people from purchasing clean energy.
- ❑ We wanted to know what are the most powerful *emotional hooks* that could make clean energy important and desirable to the American public?



The Obituary: The Future of Energy

- ❑ If you want to find out how someone feels about something, take it away from them.
- ❑ Respondents are asked to imagine fossil fuels on earth have died. Their task is to write an obituary, including:
 - ✓ What was the cause of death?
 - ✓ What will it be remembered for?
 - ✓ Who will take its place?
 - ✓ Who will miss it?



We uncovered some
surprising beliefs about fossil
fuels and clean energy.



We Like Our Fossil Fuels

the necessary evil

- ❑ People were far less critical of fossil fuels than we might have imagined. It's scary for them to imagine our world without them.
- ❑ While they clearly recognize the problems of pollution, health and energy independence, they see fossil fuels as a necessary evil because it can be relied on to power our world.
- ❑ They did not see reliable alternatives.



“It is with great sadness and regret that we announce the demise of fossil fuel. After hundreds of years of supplying the population of earth, the resource had been depleted.

It will be remembered for the warmth, comfort and pleasure it provided to living things. There will be a great void that needs to be filled perhaps through wind and solar power.

It will be sorely missed by all beings that depended on it to warm them, supply their transportation, power their equipment and support all the resources necessary for a safe and comfortable life.”

- *Connecticut Opinion Leader*



Clean energy is the obvious successor. But is it up to the job?

- ❑ People were very knowledgeable about clean energy. They were all comfortable discussing clean energy and know how it's made -- but they simply don't see it as “being up to the job.”
- ❑ Clean energy is seen as a possible alternative, but viewed as “eccentric”, with “kinks to work out.”



Next, we asked respondents to draw their “clean energy” world.

- ❑ One way to encourage people to react at an emotional level is to take away their rational tool kit -- their vocabulary.
- ❑ Now that fossil fuel is “gone”, we asked respondents to imagine that all the energy used to power their world is “clean”. We asked them to draw a picture of what this clean energy world looks like.
- ❑ We asked the respondents to name their “worlds” and date them.



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What did we learn from this research?

- ☐ Fossil fuels are viewed as a necessary evil -- bad for health, bad for the environment, bad for national security. But at the end of the day, it keeps my house warm.
- ☐ Clean energy is simply not seen as up to the job.
- ☐ Using clean energy would require sacrifices
- ☐ Clean energy is just too far in the future, or very far in the past.



The crux of the matter: Clean energy isn't seen as ready.

- ❑ *“I’ve heard this since elementary school.”*
- ❑ *“It’s more concept than product. I don’t see it in real life.”*



Finally, we showed the groups a series of “ad-like” images.

- ☐ Self-sufficiency
- ☐ Infinite/renewable
- ☐ Closer than you think
- ☐ The American spirit of ingenuity

- ☐ Jobs
- ☐ Control
- ☐ Security
- ☐ Innovative future
- ☐ Good for health/environment



The images and facts
that made clean energy seem
powerful, real, and “closer than
you think” triggered the
most positive reactions.





America already produces enough clean energy to supply all of Chicago's power requirements.

Not to mention New York, L.A., Boston, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Diego, Dallas, and San Antonio, too. Let's produce more.



The reaction was dramatic

- ❑ “I had no idea. Is that true?”
- ❑ If clean energy “already” makes enough to power big cities like Chicago, with all its lights and technology, then it must be a lot closer and more reliable than people think.
- ❑ “Let’s produce more” is a compelling thought – “Yeah, why not, let’s do it,” is the reaction.



For 30 years we've been selling clean energy because of the environment...

...But it hasn't worked!

- ❑ All survey research indicates virtually every American agrees the environment is important. In the past, clean energy advertising has leaned on the environment. It hasn't been effective – but not because people think it's not important.
- ❑ The problem? It's old news, and no longer very motivating. The environmental story is already well understood.
- ❑ Conclusion: It will take a new message to break through.



Today we need to convince consumers that clean energy is *viable* and *available*

- ❑ They already know it's better for our health;
- ❑ They already know it's better for our environment
- ❑ As the obituaries, the drawings and the concepts tell us, we need to convince people that clean energy is *strong* enough to take the place of coal, oil and nuclear. And we need to tell them it's *available*.



Ultimately this campaign needs to be built around two key ideas.

- ❑ Clean energy is more real & more powerful than you think.
- ❑ It can help make us self-sufficient for our energy needs.

Thus....



“Clean Energy:
It’s Real. It’s Here. It’s
Working!”





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visit cleanenergystates.org

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Creative Tool Kit:

☐ Television:

- ✓ 3 “15’s”
- ✓ Can be placed as “Bookends” in :60 pod
- ✓ Celebrity Voice (Peter Gallagher)
- ✓ Audio & Video logo.

☐ Print

☐ Radio

☐ Billboard



Television and Radio Advertisements

☐ Play Television and radio Advertisements



But Do The Ads Work?

- ❑ We hired a New York advertising testing firm to test our ads for effectiveness.
- ❑ Utilized focus groups with hand-held devices to measure impact of commercials
- ❑ Our commercial consistently outscored 5 other national ads in: likeability, attention getting, understandable and involving.



We Put the Campaign to Work

- ❑ Developed media plan using this message to promote the clean energy “switching” program in Rhode Island:
 - ✓ Ran television ads on Sunday talk shows, local news casts, cable
 - ✓ Ran radio ads on adult contemporary radio
 - ✓ Sent direct mail using CESA messages
- ❑ Targeted “NPR listener” -which made television and radio purchases affordable.

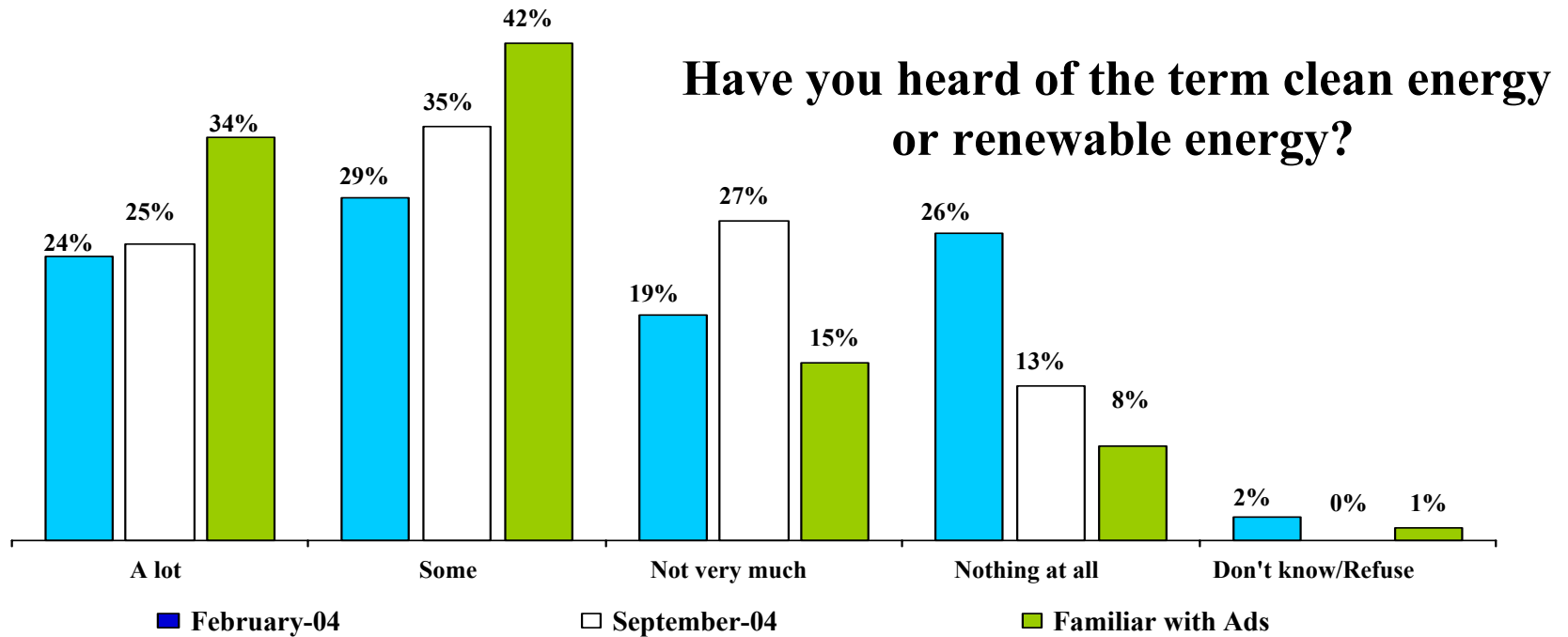


...And the Results...

- ❑ Rhode Island now boasts one of the fastest clean energy “switching” programs in the nation.



Numbers of customers count -- but Polls tell an even better story:



Summary of Success of the Clean Energy Ads in Rhode Island

- ✓ Creation of one of the fastest growing switching programs in the nation;
- ✓ Scientific “dial groups” prove the ads resonate;
- ✓ Last months tracking poll show dramatic increase in Rhode Islanders understanding of clean energy



Using an effective marketing message

- ❑ Consistency of language ... we encourage everyone to adopt the use of “clean energy”
- ❑ Clean energy logo “Its Real. It’s Here. It’s Working. Let’s Make More.” -- use it!
- ❑ Let’s get the message out with high quality TV and radio commercials -- and we can help!!



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